



**MESSAGE FROM MARSHA**  
**House District 19, State Representative**

**TOWN HALL MEETING AUGUST 22 TO DISCUSS THE WEST NILE VIRUS AND  
PLAGUE IN EASTERN EL PASO COUNTY....**

As your state representative I am committed to protecting and preserving the health and environment of the people of Colorado. I believe the role of our El Paso County Department of Health & Environment (EPCDHE) and the Colorado State Department of Public Health and Environment is to serve the people of Colorado by providing cost-effective and high quality health and environmental protection services. One of their primary responsibilities is to identify and respond to emerging issues that could affect the health of the public and environment.

Recognizing the importance of this responsibility, The El Paso County Department Health & Environment notified the public of the confirmation of the plague in prairie dog colonies in Eastern El Paso County and West Nile Virus in mosquitoes in the Fountain Valley areas.

On July 12<sup>th</sup> the El Paso County Department Health & Environment notified the public that the mosquitoes collected in El Paso County have tested positive for West Nile Virus and urged local residents to apply insect repellent to protect themselves from the virus. The sample that tested positive was collected in the Fountain Valley area as part of a testing site maintained by the EPCDHE. Lee Griffen, the EPCDHE Vector Control Director, stated that “This sample happened to come from the Fountain Valley area, but it signals that residents in the entire county are at risk for the West Nile infection and need to protect themselves”.

As a result of the large mosquito populations, EPCDHE and Fountain are stepping up efforts to address the problem. An application of mosquito repellent that contains 18% - 30 % DEET or Picaridin is strongly recommended by the Centers for Disease and Control Prevention.

As of July 12, there not have been any human cases of West Nile in El Paso County, however, cases have been recorded in Logan and Cheyenne counties.

The El Paso County Health Department on July 30<sup>th</sup> confirmed the plague in prairie dog colonies in Eastern El Paso County. The sites where the prairie dog colonies tested positive for the plague were located at Schriever Air Force Base and on neighboring property.

The plague occurs regularly in the Western United States and is most commonly detected in prairie dogs, tree squirrels, chipmunks, rabbits and similar animals that are bitten by the infected fleas. It is less common for human cases to occur, HOWEVER the plague can be transmitted to people through the bites of infected fleas or direct contact with infected animals. There have been 55 human cases of the plague reported since 1941 to present day.

On **August 22<sup>nd</sup>**, at **7:00 PM** at the **Calhan VFW** located at **568 Colorado Ave** in Calhan, a representative from the Department of Agriculture and the El Paso County Health Department will be explaining how citizens can protect themselves and their pets from getting infected, what the symptoms of the plague and West Nile Virus are and what to do if you believe you have been infected.

At this same **Town Hall Meeting** we will also be discussing possible solutions to address the rising animal abuse and neglect problems in Eastern El Paso County. Please join us for an hour of informative discussion regarding these very important issues in El Paso County.

For additional information regarding the West Nile Virus and the plague, please contact the El Paso Department of Health & Environment located at 301 S. Union Blvd, telephone 719-578-3199, or visit their website at [WWW.ELPASOCOUNTYHEALTH.ORG](http://WWW.ELPASOCOUNTYHEALTH.ORG).

Panelists for the **August 22<sup>nd</sup>** meeting include Dennis Hisey, Chair of the El Paso County Board of Commissioners; Sheriff Terry Maketa; Dr. Wes Metzler, Pikes Peak Humane Society Executive Director; Scott Dutcher, Director of Animal Control for the State of Colorado; Rosemary Bakes-Martin, Public Health Administrator; a representative from the Colorado Department of Agriculture, Animal Disease Division; and, Jerry Renick, SAINT Animal Rescue.

**WOULD YOU PLEASE JOIN US?** We need your input to properly address the issues around animal neglect and abuse and health precautions regarding the plague and West Nile Virus.

It is my honor to serve all of the citizens of House District 19! If you have any questions or concerns about this issue or any other issue, please call me at 719-238-5600 or visit my website at [www.GOMARSHA.org](http://www.GOMARSHA.org) . I look forward to listening to your concerns and suggestions at the **August 22<sup>nd</sup> Town Hall Meeting in Calhan!**

Respectfully,

Marsha Looper  
Colorado State Representative  
House District 19